

VZCZCXRO8324
PP RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHSQ #0631/01 1841645
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 031645Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY SKOPJE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4877
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RHMFISS/CDR TF FALCON
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDRUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUESEN/SKOPJE BETA
RUEHSQ/USDAO SKOPJE MK
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3611
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2071
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA 4097
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SKOPJE 000631

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/04/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MK](#)

SUBJECT: MACEDONIA: CAMPAIGN CALM EXTENDS THROUGH THE WEEKEND

REF: SKOPJE 625

Classified By: P/E CHIEF SHUBLER, REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D).

SUMMARY.

¶1. (C) Continuing a recent campaign-period trend (reftel), the July 1-2 weekend remained calm in Macedonia with only two minor campaign-related incidents reported (neither of which was substantiated.) The MOI took action against perpetrators of campaign-related incidents, and eAlbanian parties DUI and DPA (with EU, OSCE, and US Embassy/ICITAP support) coordinated on security issues related to their separate rallies July 3 in Tetovo. In separate phone calls to the DUI and DPA leaders, the Ambassador noted the positive turn of events, urged further security coordination between the two, and called for continued restraint on the part of their supporters.

¶2. (C) President Crvenkovski outlined concerns regarding opposition plans for a "premature victory" rally in downtown Skopje on election night, a concern the Ambassador raised with VMRO-DPMNE leader Gruevski on June 29. Gruevski told the Ambassador he expects his coalition will win 12-15 more MP seats than the rival governing SDSM-headed coalition. Intense media coverage of the handful of campaign-related incidents, a few of them violent, has created a skewed image of a campaign as seriously marred by violent incidents. In fact, the overall number of incidents has been small and geographically limited, with only a few incidents resulting in injuries to persons. End Summary.

CAMPAIGN CALM CONTINUES OVER WEEKEND

¶3. (U) Following a week of campaign calm during which no new campaign-related incidents were reported in Macedonia (reftel), the July 1-2 weekend in Macedonia remained generally calm. There were only two unsubstantiated allegations, both by opposition VMRO-DPMNE, of campaign-related incidents. In one, VMRO-DPMNE claimed several activists were attacked by supporters of the governing SDSM; in the second, the party claimed that one of its local HQs in downtown Skopje was vandalized by unknown

perpetrators.

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR TAKING ACTION AGAINST PERPETRATORS OF
CAMPAIGN-RELATED INCIDENTS

14. (SBU) The Macedonian police continued to investigate and charge suspects in earlier cases of campaign-related incidents. By the weekend, they had forwarded criminal charges against 14 individuals, and misdemeanor charges against 13 persons. MOI sources told us they expected to bring misdemeanor charges against another 10 or 12 individuals for campaign-related incidents before the July 5 Election Day.

E-ALBANIAN PARTIES COORDINATE ON SECURITY FOR JULY 3 RALLY IN
TETOVO

15. (SBU) Following a planning meeting between the Tetovo police chief and international community (IC - EUMM, OSCE, DOJ-ICITAP) police advisers on June 30 (reftel), the Secretaries General of ethnic Albanian DUI (governing

SIPDIS

coalition partner) and DPA (opposition) met with the police chief to coordinate logistics and planning for the July 3 evening rallies both parties will hold in Tetovo.

16. (SBU) As agreed at the June 30 meeting, the DUI and DPA officials held a press conference in Tetovo on July 2, together with the Tetovo police chief, in which they underscored their commitment to coordinating and deconflicting the two rallies to lower chances that supporters from either side would clash with groups from the other. On July 3, the IC police advisers again met with the

SKOPJE 00000631 002 OF 003

Tetovo police chief to review contingency planning for the two events, after which the DUI and DPA General Secretaries were expected to meet with the chief of police a final time for last-minute coordination.

AMBASSADOR CALLS DUI AND DPA LEADERS, URGES CONTINUED
RESTRAINT

17. (C) The Ambassador called DUI leader Ahmeti and DPA leader Xhaferi July 3 to note the recent positive turn of events, including the July 2 joint DUI-DPA press conference, and to urge them to continue to coordinate on security matters up until and after Election Day. She told Ahmeti, however, that a recent appearance by former UCK commander Samedin Zhezair (aka the Hoxha of Prizren, Kosovo) on local TV calling on DUI supporters to rise up and support Ahmeti, and a statement by one of Ahmeti's lieutenants offering to go toe-to-toe with DPA supporters over a recent violent incident (reftel), had been damaging and counterproductive. She asked Ahmeti to direct his supporters to tone down their public comments. The Ambassador also advised both leaders to consider confining their known troublemakers to party HQs on Election Day to further reduce the likelihood of clashes.

PRESIDENT: CONCERNS ABOUT OPPOSITION'S RUMORED PLAN FOR
"PREMATURE" VICTORY RALLY ON E-DAY

18. (C) In a meeting with the Ambassador June 29, President Crvenkovski said he believed recent IC actions (reftel) had helped prevent further campaign-related incidents. He expressed concern, however, about a rumored rally VMRO-DPMNE planned to hold on Skopje's city square the evening of July 5 to "celebrate" their victory before the official results were announced. He also was concerned about the eAlbanian tradition of firing shots into the air to celebrate victories or protest results prior to the release of the official voting figures. The ideal, he said, would be to avoid rallies or demonstrations for 24 hours after the election polls closed, or until the official results were announced. (NOTE: An adviser in Prime Minister Buckovski's office also

raised with us on June 30 concerns that VMRO-DPMNE might try to hold a Ukrainian-style "orange revolution" rally on July 5 if the results show anything other than a VMRO-DPMNE victory.

The Ambassador told VMRO-DPMNE leader Gruevski during her June 29 meeting with him (see below) that it would be best to wait until the official results are known before celebrating. END NOTE.)

OPPOSITION VMRO-DPMNE LEADER GRUEVSKI CALM AND COLLECTED

¶9. (C) In a meeting with the Ambassador June 29, opposition VMRO-DPMNE leader Gruevski told the Ambassador he would accept the election outcome if there were "no strong irregularities" that would change the final election results.

He was concerned, however, that SDSM was rumored to be recruiting "muscle" for some undefined purpose, presumably to carry out acts of provocation or intimidation on Election Day. Gruevski acknowledged that campaigning on both sides had gotten "tougher" in recent days, with more personal attack ads. He hoped to return to more substantive campaign themes before the end of the campaign (midnight on July 3).

¶10. (C) Gruevski estimated his coalition would win 12-15 more MPs than SDSM's coalition, and that turnout would be somewhere between 65 and 70 percent. He did not rule out a coalition with either DPA or DUI, and also said his party had "good relations" with SDSM breakaway NSDP and with the DOM party, a splinter group of the Liberal Democrats. It would be harder to include rival VMRO-Narodna, headed by former PM Georgievski. Gruevski also noted that VMRO-DPMNE had coordinated with SDSM concerning rally times and locations, and that there had been only a single serious incident (campaign-related, but not connected to any rally) between supporters of the two parties during the 3-week campaign.

SKOPJE 00000631 003 OF 003

COMMENT

¶11. (C) Intense local media focus on a handful of serious campaign incidents, some of them violent, has presented a skewed picture of a badly marred campaign. In fact, documented incidents were localized and few in number, occurring in three of Macedonia's 84 municipalities and involving violence that resulted in injuries in only 3 or 4 cases. To date, DUI has held over 350 major and minor campaign events, DPA over 150 major events, VMRO-DPMNE 97 major events, and SDSM 135 or more events; with a few rare exceptions, all of these 700 events have taken place without incident.

MILOVANOVIC